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Oil drill could provide faster solution for reaching trapped miners

From Karl Penhaul, CNN

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Plan C option is normally used to drill for oil
- A company representative says hard rock, need for precision will slow down drilling
- The 33 miners have been trapped since August 5
- Rescuers are using three drilling methods to reach them

Copiapo, Chile (CNN) -- An oil drill that rescuers are using to reach the trapped miners in Chile could provide a faster solution than the other two methods they have employed.

The Plan C drill has been able to reach depths of 1,000 meters in 24 hours, a representative of the company overseeing technical aspects of the operation said.

But officials do not know how long it will take the drill, which is normally used in very different circumstances to drill for oil, to reach the 33 men trapped 700 meters (2,300 feet) underground.

"Once we start drilling in earnest I will have a much better idea of how fast we can make it down the 700 meters to the miners," said Juan Carlos Marin, a representative for Schlumberger who is in Chile to oversee technical aspects of the operation.

He said engineers are dealing with hard rock and a much smaller area than they normally encounter.

"When we drill for oil, we have a much bigger target area of perhaps 50 or 60 meters. Here we have a margin of error of just four meters," Marin said.

Four meters is the approximate width of the tunnels in the San Jose mine complex.

The need for precision in this drilling operation means the drill will move much more slowly, he said, but he gave no precise predictions.

"If we did not have such a specific objective at 700 meters, then we could do this in two days," he said. "But what changes all this is that we have to reach an objective with precision, and so we do not know how long that could take."

For now, the company has told Chilean officials that it could take 40 days to complete the work, he said. He did not say whether time it took to assemble the rig and drill the pilot hole was included in that timeframe.

The rig, which is owned by Canadian Precision Drilling, began operations Sunday and has drilled a pilot hole down 23 meters.

A pipe will now be placed in that pilot hole, which will be encased with a steel tube and cemented in. Marin expects that work to be completed and drilling to begin in earnest within three days.

Two other drills are trying to reach the miners, who have been trapped since the mine's August 5 cave-in. The drills, dubbed Plan A and Plan B, each require two holes to be drilled and have been moving at a rate of 30 or 40 meters a day.

Plan A has drilled a 15-inch shaft to a depth of 333 meters, Mining Minister Laurence Golborne said.

A 12-inch bore hole made by the Plan B drill reached the miners Friday, making it 623 meters into the mine. But it must be widened before the miners can squeeze through -- a process that should take a few weeks. At the full diameter of 28 inches, it has reached a depth of 22 meters, according to Golborne.

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Officials already are planning how they will bring the miners to the surface once a bore hole is wide enough for the task. The daunting rescue may require an oxygen-fed cage that will haul them up one at a time.

Previously, officials have said that the workers could be rescued, if all goes well, in late October or early November.

When asked if the Plan C drill would be able to cover 100 meters a day, Marin said "ojala," Spanish for "I hope so."

It also means "that would be nice."

"When I look at their faces on their video they have sent to the surface, I would love to have them out by tomorrow," he said.

CNN's Esprit Smith contributed to this report.

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\$100k up 4 grabs in txtng chmpionshp

By the CNN Wire Staff

| Filed under: Mobile

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Finalists will text through blindfolded and marathon challenges
- Speed, accuracy and dexterity are tested
- Teenager Kate Moore of Des Moines, Iowa, won the competition last year

(CNN) -- Some of the fastest thumbs in the country will pound mobile phones at lightning speeds Tuesday for a chance to win \$100,000.

Finalists in the 2010 LG U.S. National Texting Championship in New York City will endure blindfolds, complex phrases and marathon texting during the event. The grand prize includes a donation to the charity of the winner's choice.

The finalists have already messaged their way through preliminary competition, such as on-site texting challenges at concerts, text alerts on TV shows or texting from online tournaments.

Incidentally, the competition is scheduled to take place the same day the U.S. Department of Transportation hold a summit on distracted driving.

In January, federal safety regulators proposed a set of guidelines for states to create laws that would ban text messaging while driving.

A ban on texting behind the wheel has already been enacted in 19 states and the District of Columbia. Seven states have banned the use of all handheld devices while driving.

LG has launched a program called Text Ed, which advocates safety with texting.

Last year, more than 250,000 participants young and old entered the national battle of texterity.

The final four contestants endured an exhausting battery of drills -- including texting while human emoticons attempted to distract the finalists. Competitors were judged on both accuracy and speed.

One failed to accurately text "Which wicked witch wished which more wicked witch in the well?" while a human emoticon talked trash about her sister.

In the end, 15-year-old Kate Moore of Des Moines, Iowa -- who said she texted more than 400 times a day -- took home the \$50,000 grand prize.

"It feels the best!" Moore said in a text interview with CNN. "Im so prd of myself & it feels aswm that ive gottn so far! :)"

CNN's Jason Kessler contributed to this report.

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<http://www.cnn.com/2010/TECH/mobile/09/21/texting.championship/index.html>

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FDA to consider OK of genetically engineered salmon

By Caitlin Hagan and Madison Park, CNN

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- If OK'd the salmon will be the first genetically modified animal permitted by the FDA
- Injected growth hormones make the fish reach maturity in half the growth time
- Critics question the possible health effects

(CNN) -- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration will hold a hearing Monday as it considers whether to approve genetically engineered salmon for human consumption.

If approved it would be the first genetically modified animal permitted by the food safety agency.

A company, AquAdvantage Salmon, has injected growth hormones into Atlantic salmon that enable the fish to reach maturity in half the normal growth time, 16 to 18 months, rather than 30 months.

The FDA in an analysis dated Monday, wrote: "We therefore conclude the food from AquAdvantage Salmon that is the subject of this application is as safe as food from conventional Atlantic salmon and that there is a reasonable certainty of no harm from the consumption of food from this animal."

But critics worry about the possible health effects of eating fish containing the growth hormone.

Eatocracy: What does "genetically modified" salmon mean?

"It's impossible to talk about the risks other than saying they haven't been properly assessed, other than process has been rushed and we don't know," said Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food and Water Watch. She added that the FDA is a "very stressed agency" with all the latest recalls and outbreaks, that it "can't ensure the safety of the foods they currently regulate."

Hauter said that the FDA has relied too heavily on information provided by AquAdvantage and that there should be a more extended time given to thoroughly vet and discuss risks.

A final decision is expected in a few weeks.

Find this article at:

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/09/20/genetic.engineered.salmon.hearing/index.html?hpt=Sbin>

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Study: Spray tans, tanning bed use often go hand-in-hand

Health.com

By Denise Mann, Health.com

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Those who use sunless tanning products are 2.5 times more likely to visit tanning salons
- The findings suggest that sunless tanning products are used on top of indoor tanning
- Some people tan to relieve stress or socialize

RELATED TOPICS

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(Health.com) -- Eden Lewis prefers to be "a bronzed goddess instead of a pasty Snow White," so she gets a spray tan before a vacation or an important social event.

The 18-year-old college freshman in Boston likes the convenience and instant results of spray tans.

"And most of all," she says, "I know I won't look like a shriveled prune when I'm older because of careless sessions in a tanning bed."

Health.com: 7 ways you're aging your skin

Lewis is typical in many ways. According to a new study in the Archives of Dermatology, 11 percent of teens in the U.S. have used spray tans and tanning lotions. And the teens who use these so-called sunless tanning products tend to be older teenage girls who, not surprisingly, think the sun-kissed look makes them look more attractive.

But many people who get tans from a bottle don't share Lewis's aversion to tanning beds.

In fact, the study showed that people who use sunless tanning products are about 2.5 times more likely than those who don't to visit tanning salons and get five or more sunburns during the summer -- both of which raise the risk of skin cancer and prematurely aged skin.

Health.com: Is it a mole...or skin cancer?

In short, many teenage spray tanners are a bit like a cigarette smoker who chews nicotine gum to supplement -- rather than kick -- her habit.

"If you want to look good for prom, sunless tanning could be helpful and [could] deter you from indoor tanning or staying longer at the beach or pool for that tan look," says the lead author of the study, Vilma Cokkinides, Ph.D., a researcher at the American Cancer Society, in Atlanta.

However, Cokkinides adds, the findings suggest sunless tanning products may be just another way for diehard tanners to get that coveted bronzed look.

"There are also those that are more chronic users, so we need to understand how these products are used by different groups," she says.

Health.com: Find the best self-tanner for you

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Most sunless tanning products contain dihydroxyacetone, a naturally occurring substance that interacts with amino acids in the skin to create the appearance of a tan, minus the cancer and cosmetic risks associated with ultraviolet light.

Another study in the same issue of the Archives of Dermatology suggests encouraging women to use sunless tanning products may reduce unsafe sunbathing if the women are warned about the risks of tanning.

In that study, researchers at the University of Massachusetts recruited 250 women who were sunbathing on public beaches. The women were divided into two groups. Half of them received free cosmetics, while the other half received free sunless tanning products and information about skin cancer and the benefits of sunless tanning.

They also posed for ultraviolet photographs -- a type of photography that reveals skin damage not visible to the naked eye.

Health.com: Sunproof your skin from A to Z

After two months, the women who were urged to use sunless tanning products were sunbathing less frequently, had experienced fewer sunburns, and were more likely to wear protective clothing in the sun compared to the women in the control group.

After one year, the women who received sunless tanner were still sunbathing less frequently, but there were no other differences between the two groups.

Dr. June K. Robinson, M.D., a dermatologist at the Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, in Chicago, says that sunless tanning may be an effective "harm-reduction strategy for event tanners and those who tan because they feel it looks good."

However, urging the use of sunless tanning products is not likely to be an effective strategy for people who tan for other reasons, such as to socialize or to relieve stress, says Robinson, who wrote an editorial accompanying the pair of studies.

Health.com: Study: Frequent tanning-bed use triples melanoma risk

Dr. Heidi Waldorf, M.D., the director of laser and cosmetic dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital, in New York City, tells her patients about the dangers of UV light and recommends spray tans to her patients -- especially those who insist on being tan for a prom or wedding. But she's not sure diehard tanners are getting the message.

"The benefits may only be short term for teens," she says. "Even with the emphasis on education in my practice, some girls still show up tan."

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